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LAUSD prepares to issue 11,000 preliminary pink slips; other districts to follow

March 7, 2012 | By Julie Small | KPCC

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Damian Dovarganes/AP

Teachers, parents and supporters rally as the Los Angeles Unified School District board meets to consider budget cuts and layoffs, which include adult education, preschool and elementary school arts programs, in Los Angeles on Feb. 14.

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LAUSD plans to issue 11,000 preliminary pink slips to employees next week, and teachers will be the primary target. That's to hedge the risk of automatic budget cuts during the next school year.

Gov. Jerry Brown has proposed an increase in state funding for public schools of about \$5 billion. But that extra money comes only if voters approve temporary tax hikes come November.

If they say no, they'll trigger almost \$5 billion in cuts to schools instead.

Leilani Aguinaldo Yee with LAUSD told lawmakers in Sacramento that "our board is moving forward to approve 11,000 pink slips because we are in the position of assuming that the triggers are in place."

Estelle Lemieux with the California Teachers Association told lawmakers that school districts statewide are planning as if the voters will turn down the tax hikes. She expects them to send up to 30,000 layoff notices to teachers this month.

"Districts are looking at the worst scenario, as they have to," said Lemieux. "We see districts having to do two budgets this year: Plan A and Plan B."

School districts have to issue layoff notices by March 15 and act on them by July 1. But districts won't know until November whether the trigger gets pulled on mid-year cuts.

LAUSD's Aguinaldo Yee asked lawmakers in Sacramento Tuesday to find some way to help districts postpone layoff decisions. She's hopeful that they can come up with an agreement "so that maybe those dates are adjusted

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so we're not in the position of having to lay off folks before the new fiscal year happens."

A spokesman for the governor declined to say whether Brown supports the idea of changing the layoff deadlines for workers. But he says the administration is working on a plan to help districts mitigate the risk of mid-year cuts for schools.

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The district is in this deficit because of mismanagement of funds. Corruption and fraud. How many times are we, employees, are going to ask for help. Audit. Start with the Payroll Branch. The abuse of overtime and newly created, unnecessary high paying positions is one of the reasons the district is facing these layoffs. Unqualified, uneducated employees given positions based on friendships and personal relationships. Six figure incomes. No college degree? No problem!

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